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C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 000770

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [CG](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: NEW DRC AMBASSADOR DESCRIBES MISSION, PRAISES GOR
RECEPTION

Classified By: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington for reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) In a November 19 call, new Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Ambassador Norbert Nkulu described in warm terms his reception by Rwandan officials and what he described as a large and welcoming Congolese community here - many of whom met him at the airport. He recounted with visible pleasure his presentation of credentials to President Kagame on November 16. The Ambassador described this welcome as a strong, positive symbol of the rapprochement between his country and the Government of Rwanda (GOR). He recalled that this was the first time since the 1994 genocide that his country has had an ambassador in Rwanda and said he was moved by the importance of the occasion, the sight of the DRC pennant on a Government of Rwanda car, the Presidential band's rendition of the DRC national anthem, and the honor of being received with his spouse first among the seven ambassadors presenting credentials. He added that he had a strongly positive 20 minute discussion with President Kagame and noted with pleasure that his wife and counselor were included in the meeting and the photographic session that followed.

¶2. (C) Nkulu said that the rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda had taken a great leap forward with the August summit meeting in Goma between Presidents Kabila and Kagame. That was reflected in their agreement to exchange ambassadors. Looking ahead, he said that he would focus his mission on four areas: strengthening the diplomatic and political ties between the two countries by providing direct and permanent communication between the governments; facilitating ongoing contacts, meetings, and cooperation between members of parliament of all three countries of the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) with the goal of furthering regional cooperation; promoting increased ties between other elements of the executive branches in both countries; and working to advance economic integration and development in concert with the countries of the Great Lakes region.

¶3. (C) Ambassador welcomed Nkulu, thanked him and his wife for having already attended a November 9 reception at the U.S. residence, and looked forward to seeing him at the upcoming U.S. Marine Corps Ball with other members of the diplomatic corps. After thanking Nkulu for his description of his presentation of credentials and his goals, Ambassador strongly encouraged continued efforts by the DRC and the GOR to forge strong ties in the region and to extend those efforts beyond Central Africa to include East Africa. Ambassador recalled that the DRC's Foreign Minister had said, when visiting Kigali at this time last year, that he saw the Congo's future as the spinal column for trans-African commerce. Nkulu agreed that those ties were vital and added that direct air service between Kigali and Kinshasa would contribute significantly to the process. Nkulu underscored the importance of improving other regional infrastructure, including energy, road, and rail links.

¶4. (C) Biographic note: The 63-year old Nkulu, whose full

name is Norbert Nkulu Mitumba Kilombo, was born in Katanga, the son of a railroad worker. First in his family to attend college, he studied classics and earned a law degree in 1971 from then-Lovanium University in Kinshasa. Until 2008, he served as Minister of State (and legal advisor without portfolio) in the Presidency. He described his job as liaison between the President and Prime Minister. In addition to having had his own private law firm in Kinshasa

since 1977, Nkulu has served as legal advisor in seven ministries, in the office of the Prime Minister, and for state and private companies. He played a role in Congolese political negotiations in Sun City, Pretoria, and other capitals during the transition process and has been a member of the Political Bureau of the People's Party for Reconstruction and Development (PPRD). Nkulu taught law at Malula University for six years, is the author of legal articles, and is a long-time active Lions' Club member as well as former Lawn Tennis federation Vice-President. He and his wife Veronique have four children ranging in age from 30 to 10. End Note.
SYMINGTON